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THE FOREST SERVICE

History Line

1876 1971

TO: History Coordinators 1680
Forest Service Personnel WINTER--December 15,1972

Issued by the History Branch, Information and Education Division
Washington, D. C., Room 4115-S. Bldg., Phone (202) 44-72418

Yes, we know this issue is late, and we apologize. But in order to keep on our established schedule, we decided to go to press with a brief issue. The established quarterly schedule will be maintained hereafter, and be on time.

The WO History Office has been moved--to Room 4115 South Building, and this caused delays. However, the move took us to a better office, with more room, thus the History office will be able to function more smoothly and effectively. Benjamin Franklin answered an inquiry from a woman in Philadelphia in 1776, this way, "Madam, we have a Republic--if we can keep it." We now have a history program in the Forest Service--if we can keep it! With the current restricted budgets, it's going to take some doing. It can be done if enough Forest Service people are actively interested in their own history.

The 1680 History Directive likewise fell victim to the move and holiday disruptions. But it is "in the mill" now and can be expected in the FIELD shortly. One portion of that Regulation we emphasize here, because it is vital to any kind of organized, coordinated Service-wide History Program. We quote:

"1680.3 - Policy

1. The Forest Service will maintain complete and current historical records of its work and activities.

2. Each Forest Service office, (including Washington Office Divisions) will maintain a permanent History file as outlined in FSM 1681.

3. Field units, before initiating major history projects (those involving expenditures of more than $500) will submit the proposal to the Washington Office History Officer for coordinating review, outlining subject, scope, and background information on the individual who is to undertake the project, and how it is to be financed."

(more)

This is not to censor or restrict; it is an effort to guide and help, to prevent the Service from finding itself in an untenable position. Already there has been a case where the Service contracted for a history, had the history written and paid for, without having the manuscript reviewed by another qualified historian. We want to help avoid this. Keeping the WO History Officer informed of projects in process will achieve that objective.

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOREST SERVICE, USDA, WILL COME ON AUGUST 15, 1976. This being January 1973, there remains a little more than two years to accomplish history projects that are intended for a role in the '76 Centennial celebrations. In terms of getting history written, it is already LATER THAN WE THINK. Any project that runs over into 1976 is taking a chance of not getting done in time. Publishing a book may always run into unavoidable delays.

In the case of our big HISTORY OF THE FOREST SERVICE, being done by the Forest History Society, our goal must be completion of the manuscript during calendar year 1975, and probably should be in the hands of the publisher by December 1975. Some lead time is essential for advance preparation and promotion.

NOTE: Our brief quote of the 1680 History Regulation, on its way to you, refers to FSM 1681, regarding setting up History files. This has not been distributed yet, but is being prepared here, and will be distributed as soon as possible.